

11. A CREST IN THE PLUMAGE OF THE SPOTTED BABBLER *PELLORNEUM RUFICEPS* SWAINSON

On 2nd May, 1971, I was on a hillside at Khandala when I came across a party of Spotted Babblers (*Pellorneum ruficeps*) some of which were singing on horizontal branches of trees. I had a close view of these birds for about ten minutes and noticed that the birds in song had crests.

During the course of rather casual conversation with Mr. Humayun Abdulali a few days later I mentioned this fact. He informed me that the standard reference works on Indian ornithology do not mention that the Spotted Babbler has a crest and he, therefore, arranged to show me specimens of *Pellorneum ruficeps* in the Society's collection.

We found that this bird does have slightly elongated feathers on the crown which can apparently be raised in life into a fairly noticeable tuft. In the prepared skin the elongated feathers have to be looked for.

C/O MERCANTILE BANK LTD.,
P.O. BOX NO. 128,
BOMBAY-1,
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[The occipital feathers, when they are slightly elongated, as in this species, give an impression of having a crest when the bird is excited and fluffs out the feathers on the crown. Some species of the family Pycnonotidae, e.g. Redvented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*) show this character, as also some other babblers, e.g. Browncapped Babbler, Tickell's Babbler. It is interesting to note that in such cases the birds show a definite 'cap' on the crown—the feathers on this area being different in structure and colour from the feathers on the back—Eds.]

12. PIT VIPER [*TRIMERESURUS MACROLEPIS* (BEDDOME)] BITES AT A SOUTH INDIAN TEA ESTATE

(With two plates)

The Singampatti Group of tea estates lies on the eastern side of the southernmost reach of the Western Ghats. The estate and nearby forests are very interesting for many herpetological reasons. One is the abundance of certain species of snakes which are limited to a certain biotope corresponding to specific elevations and flora. *Trimeresurus*

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macrolepis is one of over a dozen Indian pit-vipers and is common in the estate and in certain forest types (wet bamboo, streamsides) over 3000 ft.

Dr. Krishnamurthy, the Medical Officer of the Singampatti Group gave me the following interesting notes concerning *T. macrolepis* (Beddome) and the incidence of bites to the workers. This snake often spends the day quietly in tea and coffee bushes, at the base of cardamom plants, ferns near streams and in passion fruit and other vines. The snake is nocturnal and will sometimes snap when poked or pulled at.

There were 18 cases of pit-viper bite in the Group estates from June 1970 to April 1971, from *Trimeresurus macrolepis* which often rest in places where pickers will put their hands, or step.

Workers invariably tie a rope tourniquet above the bite. Bites are about 60% on women (being in the majority in field work). Incidence for hand and foot bites is 50/50 ; all bites occur during the day, an average of 18 to 20 a year.

Condition on admission. Generally no tooth marks visible ; slight swelling at the alleged site of bite (which a tourniquet can cause). The limb gradually swells (hard œdema) up to shoulder or knee. The victim experiences intense burning pain at site of bite for some hours and pain in the limb for 3-4 days after the bite, after which swelling subsides. No neurological or cardiac symptoms.

Treatment. Elevation of the limb. Magsulph fomentation to the swollen area and antibiotics given. Septic bite is rare, no mortality or serious symptoms caused by these bites. No known incidence of bites from other venomous snakes at the estate.

MADRAS SNAKE PARK,
MADRAS-22,
November 13, 1972.

R. WHITAKER

13. A NOTE ON 'GOLVA', A BAG NET, IN THE DAMANGANGA ESTUARY AT DAMAN

(With a text-figure)

Approximately 80 per cent of the inshore fish catches at Damán are by 'Golva' nets set in the Damanganga estuary. The Damanganga is a comparatively sluggish river, generally shallow except during peak monsoon months.

'Golva' is a fusiform wide-mouthed bag net made of cotton twine, of different dimensions depending upon available operational space. It is kept in position by attaching it to two poles by its mouth in the tidal zone of the estuary for catching miscellaneous fishes. Being a fixed net,